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ABSTRACT

Twenty-six American Newspaper Publishers Association research reports published since 1978 are reviewed in this paper. The paper analyzes each of the reports in order to provide an overview of what their findings really say and what newspapers can do in their own market areas to use the findings to improve their product. Among the topics covered in the reports reviewed are the following: (1) readership studies, (2) using community characteristics to predict newspaper circulation, (3) the daily news habits of the American public, (4) newspapers and television, (5) precision journalism, (6) personal needs and media use, (7) comic strips, (8) accuracy in news reporting, (9) using census data, and (10) reader interest in business, sports, and foreign news. (FL)

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American Newspaper Publishers Association

ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT

FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER No. 31 July 30, 1981

A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

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Putting Research Findings to Work

By John B. Mauro and Christopher F. Bonney

HIGHLIGHTS: The purpose of this report is to review the ANPA News Research Reports published to date to assist newspapers in applying the findings of these reports to local market situations.

It is the second in a series of reports on how to put news research findings to work. The first of the series (ANPA News Research Report No. 16, December 1978) discussed reports 1-12. This report picks up from there with comments and ideas on how to apply the findings of reports 13-30.

The authors have analyzed each of these reports to come up with an overview of what the findings really tell us—and what newspapers can do in their own market areas to utilize these findings to improve their product.

Here is a succinct, timely and informative summation of their analyses.

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"ANPA Newspaper Readership Studies"
(Report No. 13)

This report examines the results of five readership studies conducted in 1977, four previously reported in ANPA News Research Reports. The first part, directed to editors, analyzes the key demographic elements which discern newspaper readership—age, education, income and marital status. Beyond demographic characteristics, desire for news of public affairs is the "backbone" content for attracting newspaper readers and "non-political fare is the content which separates the regular reader from the occasional reader." Although enjoyment plays a secondary role in attracting newspaper readers, it nevertheless is an important role which cannot be ignored.

Other news media, according to the report, "are not drawing the audience away from newspapers . . . In all communities, the heaviest users of television news, news magazines and radio were also heaviest users of newspapers." However, those watching more television primarily for its entertainment content were more likely to be casual or non-newspaper readers. "In general, newspapers were preferred for utility, importance and thoroughness; television for treatment, enjoyment and content."

The report suggests more research on the complementary aspects of newspapers and on television news. It also suggests "vigorous promotion of the newspaper's initial advantages, as well as its pleasurable aspects" when the primary target is the casual or occasional reader. The second part, directed to researchers, suggests a movement away from description of the "status quo" and into identification of more universal concepts.

We say Amen! to both . . . and add the idea that before entering into any "vigorous promotion" the circulation and advertising departments should be consulted so that the promotion does not hinder any previously-set goals of either department.

"Using Community Characteristics to Predict Newspaper Circulation—Literature Review"
(Report No. 14)

This report looks at total population, number of households, length of residence, income, education, competition and media use as predictors of newspaper circulation. It found that total population can be a fair predictor in some communities; but generally it is not as good a predictor as we might desire.

Number of households per se is not as good a predictor as number of owner-occupied homes and single-family units.

Length of residence can be "iffy" depending on the community. In some it is a good predictor, while in others it shows little correlation with circulation.

Total household income, viewed on an individual basis, is probably the most documented predictor of newspaper circulation.

Competition from other media or other newspapers can have divergent effects. Other newspapers published in the same community are likely to limit coverage of any one newspaper. As we have seen earlier, interest in other news sources such as television news, radio or news magazines is likely to have a positive effect on newspaper readership.

What action can we take? Well, it seems that most predictors of newspaper readership depend, in some degree, upon the community itself. Therefore, it would be advantageous to test the significance of these and other predictors in your circulation area by conducting a survey. If findings are useful, plan to repeat the study three or four years hence to check on any movement which may have taken place.

"Daily News Habits of the American Public"
(Report No. 15)

This report has a lot of information on media exposure. If you have not read it, please do so. If you already have read it, do it again.

The most interesting aspect of this study, and probably the most actionable part, is that it supports the idea that although fewer young people read a newspaper on the average than do older persons, yet over a 10-year measured period there was less drop-off among young readers than older readers. This occurred both in the number of readers and in time spent reading a newspaper. The study supports the notion that "young adults are more likely to use no news medium" on a particular day.

Look critically, then, at suggestions to load your newspaper with more news of interest to young people. You may discourage the older readers who may have been already discouraged. If possible, conduct a study which takes a snapshot of your readers now. Do the same study five years from now to note changes.

"The Influence of Community Attachment on Newspaper Reading Habits"
(Report No. 17—Part One)

This study, conducted in Columbia, S.C. where there is a fair-sized military population, shows that adults who have strong community attachments read

more daily newspapers and spend more time reading daily newspapers than those who do not have strong community attachments. In addition, those with strong community attachments prefer more content about the community.

What to do about this in your community? Encourage more content to help people take pride in the community. Become a partner with the public on community projects through some involvement of newspaper personnel and through sponsorship of public service projects.

"Newspapers with Separate Editorial Managements have Higher Household Penetration"
(Report No. 17—Part Two)

Data from this study suggest that morning and evening newspapers under single ownership have higher circulation to household ratios when they have different editors than when they have the same editors for both editions. It is especially so among the top 100 markets. Subscription policies and competition from other newspapers exert little effect on the relationships.

Obviously, if we have the same editors for both morning and evening newspapers we are not likely to change this system. But we can study the newspapers that have different editors and high circulation-to-household ratios to see what it is about their content which may be different from ours or what it is they are doing that we are not.

"Newspaper Readership and Community Ties"
(Report No. 18—Part One)

This study examines persons in three categories according to the strength of ties to the community in which they live.

Those with strong ties are the "traditional" newspaper readers who are more inclined toward reading hard news and desire to know more about what is going on. They seek political guidance and look to the newspaper for "surveillance of the social environment."

Those who have a lesser association with the community perceive the role of the newspaper as the provider of entertainment, shopping and other soft news.

The third group has the fewest ties with the community and has the least interest in newspaper content. They use the newspaper primarily to pass time.

This report reinforces the importance of news in the newspaper. At the same time it suggests that the newspaper should be proportionately balanced, giving first priority to news, then to feature content.

"Precision Journalism: Coming of Age"
(Report No. 18—Part Two)

Statistics and statistical analysis are now commonplace and can be used effectively as tools for developing social and economic photographs of the community. And survey research which provides data on public attitudes, opinions and behavior gathered on a formal basis will garnish a news story with added relevance.

Many newspapers are conducting surveys and using the numbers. A modest financial outlay can get things started. But first you must get these three books:

Precision Journalism by Philip Meyer. (Indiana University Press, 1973);

Handbook of Reporting Methods by Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw and David Grey. (Houghton-Mifflin, 1976);

Newsroom Guide to Polls and Surveys by Cleveland Wilhoit and David Weaver. (American Newspaper Publishers Association, 1979).

"Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects"
(Report No. 19—Part One)

People value both television news and newspapers for knowledge, diversion and as adjuncts to interpersonal communication. They are complementary to each other, but do compete for time, however, since they both provide entertainment.

Let's look at a box score of television vs. newspapers as it came out of this report.

Television	Newspapers
Fulfills general surveillance function	Satisfies specific information seeking role
Is a substitute for other personal activities	
Favored by those who ask others for information	Preferred by those who give opinions
Preferred by persons in lower socio-economic status	Preferred by persons in higher socio-economic status
Provides information for new short-term political attitudes and general political interest	Associated with reinforcement of pre-existing attitudes

	More effective at increasing levels of political knowledge
	More strongly associated with voter turnout and other political activity
Heavy usage among those having more distrust of others, more fear of world in general	More use among those having less distrust of others
	Associated with formation of attitudes about topics
	Associated with greater knowledge of topics
	More effective in conveying detailed information
Has greater information loss	
Makes people aware of important breaking news	Provides additional or complementary information
Regular TV news watchers more likely to be newspaper readers	Readers more likely to watch TV news regularly

As you read down this box score you will see that television cannot be ignored. Yet, it cannot be deemed an important competitor as an information provider, but newspapers should be aware of the growing influence television may have as future information providers. Television competes with newspapers for leisure time and as such it would be unwise to provide features and other entertainment to try to unseat television's entertainment value. Conversely, features that provide useful information, either of happenings or of daily living, can provide a superior adjunct.

"Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business"
(Report No. 19—Part Two)

About 40 percent of the general population feel that newspapers' coverage of news events is usually or always believable. Network television news coverage ranks nearly the same. Among the general population, only college students consider any one medium more reliable than the others. This group feels that newspapers provide the more credible coverage of the news.

Among governmental officials, newspapers and news magazines are said to be more believable than television news. State and local officials are more likely to be suspicious of "leading" national newspapers than are their federal counterparts.

Perhaps the most disturbing finding is the indication that a strong majority of the public feels newspapers and television bias the news and distort events. Roughly seven out of 10 people feel that newspapers and television place too much emphasis on "bad" news and too little on "good."

This should serve as strong notice to editors, reporters and educators that every effort should be made to continually assure the reading public that newspapers are endeavoring to provide honest, responsible and balanced coverage of all news events, good and bad.

"Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business—Part 3"
(Report No. 20)

During the last 15 years, there have been great changes from traditional life values to more "me" oriented values. These changes are reflected in the reading public's changing stance toward newspapers and newspaper reading.

In years past, there was an understanding that self-denial, conformity, a commitment to work and materialism were all part of the American way. Success was measured by how well you persevered in each of these areas. Since the mid-sixties, though, these tenets have been replaced by the three S's—Self-fulfillment, Self-gratification and Self-expression.

The three S's impact on newspapers in the way that readers expect the newspaper to help them fulfill these new needs. Newspaper readers do not want to plod through the newspaper, this report says. They want to get tidy little summaries of the news which they can survey at a single glance. Moreover, they want the newspaper to be a provider of information on the subjects which give them a greater image of self-cultivation. Yet, other research from many areas suggest that the role of the newspaper is to provide news as it happens, and in detail.

"Personal Needs and Media Use"
(Report No. 21—Part One)

What factors influence people's decisions to read a newspaper? The findings suggest several marketing and promotional strategies.

Of the nine personal needs mentioned in this study, media are most relied upon for "keeping tabs on things." In fulfilling this need, newspapers and television are ranked nearly the same. Newspapers are found to be more relied upon by young people of both sexes, and by middle-aged and older males. Adolescents, middle-aged women and older women indicate that they rely more upon television for helping them

keep up with things.

In terms of satisfying the need to have information which gives a person influence over others, newspapers are the most-used source for adolescent females, young people of both sexes and older females.

Newspapers are not said to be as effective as television in terms of helping people "kill time" or be "entertained."

Newspapers are stronger than television in acting as the agenda-setter for the reader/viewer. Either for shopping or entertainment planning, many readers rely upon the newspaper much more than television as a provider of pertinent facts and figures.

"Locating and Identifying Stable New Subscribers"
(Report No. 21—Part Two)

Circulators will be able to make good use of this report. While most studies of subscriber attrition have concentrated on gathering information about those who drop from their subscriber roles "after the fact," this report suggests a methodology which focuses on gathering information before attrition occurs. This methodology can be used by just about any newspaper.

Begin by drawing, from among your list of new subscribers, a systematic random sample. Telephone interviews, which gather information about demographics and attitudes, are completed with each member of the sample. The circulation department continues to monitor the retention of each new subscriber in the sample for at least 12 months so that attrition rates can be established.

In other words, you have information about new subscribers in advance. Wait until they cancel; then determine what characteristics discriminate between the early cancelers, the later cancelers, or the non-cancelers over, say, a year's time.

If you want to know why people stop subscriptions, this method is a good way to get the answer.

"Newspaper Readership and Circulation—An Update: 1977-79"
(Report No. 22—Part One)

One technique for creating a detailed picture is to make a mosaic. The ANPA News Research Center has been creating a mosaic in recent years of newspaper readership and circulation research. Elements of the mosaic are questions you ask yourself from time to time, such as why do some people read newspapers often, some people less often and some not at all; or what effects do different graphics have on the readers' image of their newspaper.

Various studies that attempt to answer these questions represent the tiles of the mosaic. Obviously, the finer the tile or the finer the analysis, the clearer the image becomes. There is one big difference between a traditional mosaic and that available from the ANPA News Research Center. The Research Center is computerized and anyone who desires to look at any element of it can do so by contacting Dr. Maxwell E. McCombs, Director, ANPA News Research Center, S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. 13210. This refers to the earlier work (Report No. 3), which brought into focus studies from 1950 to 1976 and gives us a detailed update to 1979.

The report classifies the elements into two groups. The first group refers to questions for which answers are sought. These are called focal questions or dependent variables. As you know, for example, the amount of circulation a newspaper has can be considered a dependent variable. It depends on price, content, amount of promotion, size of circulation sales staff and other such factors, which are appropriately called independent variables. The report calls these independent variables analysis perspectives.

Some 574 research findings available deal with these 15 focal questions:

1. Reading/Non-Reading
2. Subscribing/Non-Subscribing
3. Frequency of Reading
4. Amount Read
5. Selection of a Newspaper
6. Newspaper/Other News Media
7. Selection of Items
8. Reading Two Newspapers
9. Time Newspaper is Read
10. Reading Method
11. Circulation Penetration
12. Penetration Trends
13. Circulation Patterns
14. Pattern Trends
15. Perception of Newspaper Attributes

The action which this part of the report suggests is that if you have any questions or face any problems regarding news content, reader attitudes, circulation or graphics you should request studies about those subjects. And if you have conducted studies that will fill a gap in the mosaic, please contribute them. If the data is confidential, it will be treated as such.

"Rate of Adoption of Modern Format by Daily Newspapers"
(Report No. 22—Part Two)

The purpose of this report was "to determine the extent to which modern typography has been adopted by the nation's daily newspapers." This study lists 21 specific typographic styles for front pages and 19 for inside pages showing the proportion of newspapers using them. As a first step, how about looking at your newspaper and your use of each of these styles to see how much in tune you are with other newspapers in your circulation group. You may find that you want to make some changes.

A major finding of this study, however, is that there is virtually no connection between format and circulation. Although readers like the modern format, it doesn't affect the decision to purchase—implying that there are other more important factors that affect circulation and readership.

Newspaper graphics must change with the times because they do compete with other printed material. They, therefore, must look up-to-date. But we must also recognize that if your newspaper is losing circulation, change in format or graphics alone will not reverse the circulation trend.

"Newspaper Readership Among Public School Children, Grades 7-12"
(Report No. 23)

One of the conclusions of this report is that newspapers must place increased effort in maintaining home delivery. This report, based on a readership study of public school students in Richmond, Va., showed that the greatest predictor of newspaper readership among children is the availability of a newspaper in the home. If newspapers are to cultivate future readers, home delivery, as well as school newspaper programs, should be maintained.

The study revealed that nine out of 10 students either read or were exposed to a daily newspaper on a regular basis. Students do not read the newspaper from beginning to end like most adults. Rather, they turn to the section which has the information of greatest interest to them. Boys preferred to start with the sports pages while girls show greater interest in reading the comics.

"The Comic Strip Problem"
(Report No. 24—Part One)

Editors say they have very few problems *adding* comic strips, but when it comes to *dropping* a comic strip, it is not so easy. Today they want some advance assurance that when they need to drop a comic strip they will not drop readers as well. This is a methodology report that suggests eight ways to drop comic strips while reducing the risk of losing readers.

The eight ways are predicated basically on one survey method—a survey of comic strip readership using an intensity scale. The author uses a scale of one to seven. Other scales can be used, too. The most popular scale is: almost always read, read sometimes, hardly ever read—which assigns numeric values, usually 3, 2, 1, respectively.

One method listed in the report suggests using simple readership scores which, as the author points out, do not gauge reader interest. Therefore, dropping a comic strip simply on the basis of readership scores alone does not give an editor any assurance that when he drops a low readership comic strip he is not dropping a few highly loyal (and perhaps vocal) readers as well. Combining readership scores with intensity scores helps to lessen this risk. The report suggests creation of an index that combines the two measures. In addition, the report suggests that once a readership/intensity study is completed, this information leads to other methods and combinations of methods.

The data also can be factor analyzed. Simply stated, factor analysis collapses a large number of categories (comics in this case) into fewer categories by bringing together those categories that closely correlate with each other. In this case they are brought together by the correlation of readers' scores—readers who read the same comics with near equal interest or intensity.

Another method using factor analysis suggests dropping those comics with low readership which also group in readership with other comics and retaining isolated comics even if readership is low; or dropping a comic strip which has the lowest reading score within an over-represented factor group.

In short, if you conduct a survey of comic strip readership using an intensity scale, you have several options to help make your decisions less risky.

"Effects of a Year-Long Series of Energy Articles"
(Report No. 24—Part Two)

Newspaper readers of Dane County, Wisconsin, which includes the City of Madison, were given questionnaires regarding attitudes toward energy and a knowledge test, prior to the publication of a year-long series of articles "explaining city, state and national energy problems." There were 15 installments, usually starting on the front page of the Sunday newspaper, about 100,000 words in all, from September 1976 to June 1977. After the series, the same sample of read-

ers was given the knowledge test and attitude questionnaire.

What resulted is that newspaper readers who said they read the articles improved their knowledge of energy somewhat more than did newspaper readers who did not see the articles. Older readers (65+) scored lowest of all age groups before the articles appeared, and improved their scores the least after the articles appeared. Also, readers of the energy articles were found more likely to be more concerned about energy than the non-readers of the articles.

One basic problem with a test of this kind is that over a period of nearly a year there is no way to isolate the sample from other news on the subject. Therefore, it is possible that some of those who did not read the series in the test could have read more *other* articles on energy, thereby narrowing the differences between the two groups.

This study suggests that, very likely, had the sample been magically isolated, the impact of the series might have been substantially greater. In a sense, it is like looking at gains in circulation over the past year. From last year to this year gains might come to say, 3 percent. But actually, this gain might contain a loss of 10 percent and a gain of 13 percent. The effect of the circulation sales department is +13 percent, not +3 percent.

When you run a series, be sure to recognize the fact that surveys are likely to measure the net result, but what is more useful is the readership movement the series generates.

"Accuracy in News Reporting—
A Review of the Research"
(Report No. 25)

Whisper the words "reporting errors" in a newsroom and you'll see all ears perked in your direction. It is not surprising since this problem has rasped the sensitivities of editors and reporters for a long time. This report synthesizes possible sources of inaccuracies from 37 studies published during the past 30 years. It concentrates on potential causes of inaccuracy not associated with simple errors such as spelling, grammar or typographical errors.

The report recognizes inaccuracies stemming from the type of interview and news source. Telephone interviews were found to contain more errors than personal interviews or reporters' personal observations at events. Stories obtained by press release were found to be the most accurate. In other words, when a reporter functions as an editor or an observer, there is less chance of making reporting errors than if he is involved with a story through an interview or a news conference. Of course, more errors are cited when there is more handling of information between reporter and rewrite.

Time pressures and errors originating from news sources—i.e., the Three-Mile Island incident—were listed, as well as imprecise words that may lead to perceived errors caused by headline wording.

Inaccuracies from psychological and attitudinal conditions of reporters also were cited. The report suggests that social issues (housing, racism, sexism, ecology, etc.) generate more errors than straight news stories, as do reporters' attitudes when covering controversial issues.

Writing style seems to make a difference, too. The "inverted pyramid" news style creates more errors than the narrative style, according to the report.

As you can see, this report provides a sizable list of probable causes of reporting errors. As an editor interested in reducing the number, you might look at the list provided in the report. Select the probable cause which you can do the most about or which provides you with the best chance of success according to the tools you have at hand. Once a solution system is implemented and seems to be working for the first problem area, start on the next probable cause, and so on.

"The Influence of Local Information on Daily Newspaper Household Penetration in Canada"
(Report No. 26—Part One)

One major factor in daily newspaper circulation in areas away from the newspaper's home city is the amount of local news about these areas covered in the newspaper. Another factor has to do with the geography of the area and work and commuting patterns.

Weekly newspapers, and even shoppers, have been able to make inroads in a number of newspaper markets because newspapers have not covered local events of interest to those who live in the outlying areas, according to this study. Weekly newspapers, recognizing this weakness on the part of some dailies, have stepped in and filled suburban residents' needs. This can be especially sensitive in markets where a substantial portion of the newspaper's market is located away from the home city.

If newspapers want to maintain or improve household penetration in areas away from the home city, they will have to make commitments to cover events in these areas. Otherwise, they cannot be surprised when an enterprising weekly steps into the market and steals their readers in those areas.

It is important, therefore, that continuous mon-

itoring of circulation and household coverage in other communities of the circulation areas be done. At the same time analyze content to determine how much coverage those communities receive during the same periods.

"Personal Motivations and Newspaper Readership"
(Report No. 26—Part Two)

Here we have evidence to support earlier findings that motivations are better predictors of newspaper readership than most demographic characteristics. Where readers and non-readers are found to be different is in their desire to be aware of and to keep up with local and national news and events. Readers and non-readers are found to be very much alike in their desire to seek entertainment and relaxation.

Many non-readers, and others who do not read all of the newspaper, show an expressed desire to avoid articles about local and national news. Among non-readers, there is just as strong an inclination to not keep up with merchandise at stores and sales.

In order to attract more non-readers into the newspaper, we should be inclined to make changes which include the addition of more entertainment-type features. In doing this, though, the newspaper editor must be careful not to alienate those who are already good newspaper readers. In order to attract non-readers, we must start promotions which stress the entertainment and relaxation features in the newspapers.

"The Newspaper Editor As Graphic Strategist"
(Report No. 27)

To keep up with the "blitz" of new graphic styles to which the reading public is becoming accustomed, newspapers ought to examine new and more pleasing ways of presenting the news. Indeed, skillfully-applied graphics *taken from the editor's point of view* can invite many non-readers into the newspaper. This report presents a fine explanation of the "structural approach" to newspaper layout as well as many "how-to" examples and illustrations.

If you have not already done so, read this report—if not with an eye toward implementing graphic styles at your newspaper, at least so that you will be aware of the effect that good, clean design can have on the total newspaper package. Sensible, eye-catching illustrations or layout can often attract a would-be non-reader to a particular story or feature.

"Reader Interest in Business, Sports and Foreign News"
(Report No. 28)

Business News

The first in this series of three articles presents findings about the nature of business news coverage. It offers several opportunities for newspaper editors.

The public is much more interested in business news than most of us may think. The public, in general, is interested in stories about local business and industry. Young people are interested in reading about the way business and industry affect the environment. They also want to learn more about new products, according to this study.

Stories about national business and industry and stock market reports fare least well among nearly all demographic groups. Readership of these items is highest among professionals, and men rather than women, perhaps in part due to the fact that these are the people most likely to have investments or professional interests which they need to follow.

An interesting finding is that nearly all respondents believe newspapers and television are somewhat biased toward business and industry.

This study was conducted in North Carolina. Its findings may not apply in all parts of the country. Nonetheless, they indicate an interest in, especially, local business news which we can use as a mechanism for bringing in new readers.

Sports News

The second part of this report is based on a survey conducted in St. Lawrence County, New York. It confirms the earlier notion that men are the strongest readers of sports news. Two-thirds of those interviewed classified themselves as regular readers of news about sports compared to only one-third of the women.

But women are found to be better followers of local sports news than men. This comes, perhaps, from women following the sports in which their children are involved. Also, greater coverage is being given to women athletes than may have been given in years past.

These findings present interesting ideas which can be examined on the local level. Consider conducting a readership survey of your own sports pages to see which sports and sporting news items are read most and sought most. You may get a few surprises, especially regarding readership by women.

Foreign News

This report, based on a survey of household heads in Syracuse, N.Y., finds that readers are interested only somewhat in stories about foreign conflicts. But, they can be especially interested in stories about foreign conflicts which have a U.S. or home country angle. Quotes in this report sum up readers' interests in foreign news like this: "How do other people solve their problems? Are they like ours? How can we learn from them? What do they have that will help us? What do they do that is better than we do?" And, lastly, "Can we use it to help ourselves?"

Answer these questions in promoting to the public and you may help improve your circulation.

"Minneapolis Meets New Information Needs"
(Report No. 29—Part One)

Over time, some 16,000 same-day interviews have been amassed by Minneapolis newspapers' aided recall surveys. Respondents have been asked to comment on each article they say they read in that day's paper:

How much of the item did you look at or read?

How concerned are you about the topic of the story?

How much more would you like to see in the newspaper about this topic?

Every item in the newspaper was subsequently content-analyzed and fitted into one of 50 categories predetermined by the newspaper staff. Newspapers were distributed in the newsroom which showed the readership of each article and how each article ranked among all the items in that day's paper.

One very major change made based on these readership surveys was the clustering of "like" stories in the same section of the paper. It was decided that the newspaper should not force readers, whose time may already be at a premium, to thumb through the paper page-by-page in order to find all of that day's "like" stories. Articles are placed into three general categories:

Serious News, i.e., government and politics, business and labor, energy and editorial page items

Soft News, i.e., people stories, society items, comics and entertainment

Thrill-Seekers, i.e., crime and law enforcement, unusual occurrences.

These are but a few of the fine examples discussed in this report. The actual findings may be different in your newspaper market. The methodology, however, can be used by all newspapers.

Every day readers are given a substantial amount of news in their daily newspapers. Very few of us take the trouble to find out who is reading what in the newspaper. We ought to try more of this type of research.

"Ottaway Completes Three-Phase Study"
(The Basic Ottaway Plan)
(Report No. 29—Part Two)

Newspaper research alternatives for smaller newspapers are the subject of this report. The Ottaway group of community newspapers undertook a series of planned readership studies at many of the group's newspapers. The key to the Ottaway project is that these studies were done almost entirely by each newspaper's own staff.

Small newspapers across the country can follow many of the methods used by Ottaway, even if they are not part of a large newspaper group. Ottaway had the benefit of assistance from students and faculty from Syracuse University. Other papers may want to establish contacts with the colleges and universities in their states.

After relying in large part upon the professionals to design the survey questionnaires and methodologies, each newspaper was given a schedule of tasks which had to be completed. At the conclusion, each newspaper's results were tabulated and reported. Then, results of all newspapers were gathered and compared to produce overall conclusions and findings.

Not only was Ottaway able to complete major readership surveys at 11 of its newspapers at a fraction of the usual cost, but when it was all over they had trained personnel at each newspaper who would be able to repeat the exercise at later dates with a minimum of retraining.

We should mention here that the intent of this particular report is not to bypass independent research companies. Rather, if cost determines whether or not research is to be done in the first place, it may be in the best interest of all to get started on a do-it-yourself type than not do any at all.

"Using Census Data"
(Report No. 30—Part One)

By comparing results of the 1970 United States Census with those of the 1980 Census, now being published and distributed, newspapers everywhere can

see just how their markets have changed during the past 10 years. Demographic changes, such as in the distribution of age, income, family size and educational attainment are among the most obvious uses of census data. Knowing about such changes can be most helpful in producing a newspaper which fills the needs of its reading public.

Census findings also can be put to good use editorially. This report shows several fine examples, such as the Milwaukee Journal article on how black families in Milwaukee compare economically to black families in other large cities. Census data are available down to tract-by-tract and city block tabulations.

On the business side, census data can be put to very good use by circulators who are constantly trying to pinpoint areas where new, stable subscribers can be found. The advertising departments can help new or existing advertisers locate profitable and efficient locations for new stores using census data.

Most large cities have offices of the Census Bureau where information is available in many forms. For those who cannot afford to use expensive computer or time-sharing services, census data is as close as the nearest public library. This report mentions many fine publications which are available at little cost for you to use at your newspaper.

"College Students' Use of Newspapers For Political Commentary"
(Report No. 30—Part Two)

Here we have another study which points out the importance of planting the newspaper habit early in people's lives.

This study found that newspapers have a loyal, but very small, following among college students. In terms of obtaining political commentary, students who rely upon newspapers are likely to be those from families with higher incomes and those who consider themselves to be members of traditional political parties. They tend to be more conservative than their counterparts who prefer to rely upon other sources for political thought.

Newspapers were found to be more heavily relied upon by those students with academic majors in business, science or engineering, especially among students who were college sophomores. As they became juniors and seniors, though, the students became more casual about newspaper reading—more like their art and humanities-major friends.

It makes sense for newspapers, with an eye toward future readers, to notice this reluctance among younger readers to consult the newspaper for political commentary. Editors might consider encouraging more letters from readers to achieve more diverse commentary which seems to please younger readers and probably older readers as well. ■

Have you read . . .

"Business Coverage is Getting Better" by Ernest Hynds, *Journalism Quarterly*, Summer 1980.

National survey of daily newspapers finds that they are more aware of need for business coverage and are devoting more space to it.

"Daily Newspaper Non-Readers: Why They Don't Read" by Paula Poindexter, *Journalism Quarterly*, Winter 1979.

Analysis of non-readers in nine Eastern cities shows that there are two distinct subgroups of non-readers.

"Using a Decision Model To Evaluate Newspaper Features Systematically" by Robin Cobbey and Maxwell McCombs, *Journalism Quarterly*, Autumn 1979.

This article provides the technical and statistical details needed by researchers to implement the decision model outlined in ANPA News Research Report No. 4, July 1977.

"Newspaper Reading in Two Towns" by Eugene Shaw and Daniel Riffe, *Journalism Quarterly*, Autumn 1979.

Surveys in two Tennessee communities show distinct difference in attention paid to local news and find that demographics are not equally good predictors in both towns.

Other research of interest . . .

The School of Journalism and Center for New Communications at Indiana University are continuing with their series of research reports of interest to working journalists and journalism educators. The latest reports are:

"Pretrial Publicity and Juries: A Review of Research," by Judith M. Buddenbaum, David H. Weaver, Ralph L. Holsinger, and Charlene J. Brown.

"Journalism & Mass Communication Research in the United States: Past, Present & Future," by David H. Weaver and Richard G. Gray.

Copies may be obtained from Center for New Communications, School of Journalism, Ernie Pyle Hall 212, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405. Price is $2.00 each. Make checks payable to Indiana University Foundation.